

PEOPLE WITH A MEDICAL CONDITION NEED A FLU SHOT



WHY SHOULD I GET THE FLU SHOT?

People who have a medical condition are at higher risk of complications from the flu. If you get the flu, your medical condition may also get worse.

Anyone with the following medical conditions should get the flu shot:

- Asthma or chronic lung disease
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Kidney disease
- Anemia
- A weakened immune system because of a medical condition (for example, AIDS or HIV infection) or because of medications that they take (for example, long-term use of steroids)
- People who are very obese

If you have a medical condition, you probably have a routine to manage it. For example, if you have diabetes, you monitor your blood sugar levels. Or if you have asthma, you keep your inhaler handy. **Getting the flu shot every year is just another part of your medical management routine. It's your best defence against the flu and serious flu complications, such as pneumonia.** Since the flu is contagious, it's also important that your family and friends get the flu shot as well.

Get a flu shot early. It's a good idea to get the flu shot at the start of flu season. Flu season can begin as early as October and last until May. It takes about two weeks for the shot to give you protection against flu viruses. The sooner you get the flu shot, the sooner you will be protected.



WHY DOES HAVING A MEDICAL CONDITION PUT ME AT INCREASED RISK OF SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS FROM THE FLU?

Having a medical condition can make your immune system less able to fight infections. People with medical conditions are more likely to get flu complications which may result in hospitalization or occasionally even death.

HOW CAN I AVOID GETTING THE FLU?

- **Get your flu shot.** It will protect you, as well as your family and friends.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains alcohol.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your arm, not your hand.
- Stay at home if you are sick, and avoid contact with people who are sick with the flu.
- Clean surfaces often (for example, counter tops, keyboards and telephones). Flu viruses can live on surfaces for up to eight hours.



IS THE FLU SHOT SAFE?

The flu shot is very safe! Like all medicines, flu vaccine ingredients have been tested to make sure they are safe. Public Health Ontario and the Public Health Agency of Canada check the safety of the flu shot regularly.



WHERE DO I GET THE FLU SHOT?

You can get the publicly funded flu shot at a pharmacy, your health care provider's office, a workplace flu clinic or a public health clinic. It's easy to find a flu shot clinic at ontario.ca/flu.



I THINK I HAVE THE FLU, WHAT CAN I DO?

If you develop flu symptoms, contact your health care provider. Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough or sore throat, headache and tiredness. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea.